



City of Omaha
Jean Stothert, Mayor

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September 3, 2013

Omaha, NE – On Friday August 30, Mike McDonnell demanded changes to the original Memorandum of Understanding outlining the terms of his retirement that was signed by Mayor Jean Stothert and McDonnell on August 25. The final agreement was to be signed Friday by 4:30 p.m. Mayor Stothert was willing to sign the agreement, but refused to agree to McDonnell's last-minute demands to change the terms.

McDonnell wanted the following added to the final retirement agreement:

"Mayor Stothert agrees that her public statements on KMTV Channel 3 on August 29, 2013 regarding the paramedic training program were in no way directed at McDonnell or his performance as Fire Chief. The Mayor further acknowledges that the State of Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services has confirmed that the firefighters who are students currently in paramedic training program will be eligible to sit for the National Registry test upon completion of the Omaha Fire Department's paramedic training program."

"Mr. McDonnell's demand is outside the scope of our agreement and we believe inappropriate for inclusion," said Mayor Stothert.

On August 1, 2013, the Omaha Fire Department Training Agency was inspected by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. The inspection report gave the training agency a rating of "failure". Out of 9 categories evaluated, the agency received 7 fail grades. (HHS report attached)

In the statement provided to KMTV Channel 3, Mayor Stothert said, "The inspection of the current paramedic training class and the subsequent report's findings are of great concern and must be addressed immediately. The failure rating given by the Department of Health and Human Services is unacceptable. The current paramedic class has been the source of controversy and increased costs in the Omaha Fire Department budget. This is a very serious matter and we owe it to the taxpayers to resolve it immediately. I am working with interim Fire Chief Bernie Kanger to do so. The city is prepared to take action that is appropriate which could include discipline and discontinuing the class."

In an August 30, 2013 letter, HHS notified the Omaha Fire Department that the paramedic class "may be eligible to participate in NREMT paramedic examination" if they complete the steps required to obtain their "Letter of Review" prior to your student's course completion date". Currently, this has not been completed.

McDonnell also demanded an amendment to the original MOU to require the city to pay for his school tuition expenses in 2012 and 2013. Mayor Stothert rejected that demand. "The taxpayers should not be responsible for paying this bill," said Mayor Stothert.

Mike McDonnell remains on paid administrative leave. Interim Fire Chief Bernie Kanger continues in his role as interim chief.

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED:

1. Memorandum of Understanding
Signed by Mayor Stothert and Mike McDonnell August 26, 2013
2. Amendment from Mike McDonnell, received Thursday August 29, 2013 (including tuition reimbursement)
Rejected by Mayor Stothert
3. Amendment from Mike McDonnell, received Friday August 30, 2013
Rejected by Mayor Stothert
4. HHS Inspection Report

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